

NSC BRIEFING

20 August 1957

**REPERCUSSIONS OF DEVELOPMENTS IN SYRIA**

- I. Actions and counteractions accompanying recent Syrian charges against the United States simply point up basic elements in a growing conflict between the two countries.
- A. The Syrian government has chosen to move into close relations with the Communist bloc.
  - B. Syrian relations with the West have become more strained. For example, Syria has failed to restore relations with France and Britain.
  - C. Leftist army officers are assuming more and more authority in Syria.
  - D. Syrian charges of an American plot are consistent with the general Syrian and Egyptian line that the US is plotting to subvert governments throughout the Middle East.
  - E. Syria has had relations with governments--Jordan, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia--which have recently adopted a more friendly attitude towards the United States.
- II. The first impact of Syria's closer ties with the Soviet bloc was to arouse apprehension among Syria's neighbors and even among the Egyptians as well as within the country itself. This uneasiness was dispelled with the Syrian charges of an American plot.
- A. The Syrian charges have been accepted by the extreme nationalists in most Arab states who are only too ready to believe that the US has taken over the imperialist role once assigned to Britain and France.

25X1

DOCUMENT NO. 10

~~SECRET~~

Approved For Release 2005/12/14 : CIA-RDP79R00890A000800100010-7

- B. Moderate elements who do not accept the Syrian charges will view recent events in connection with Syria as an important gain for the USSR in the Middle East.
- C. They are looking to the United States to take decisive action to check the growth of Soviet influence and will be easily discouraged by the lack of such action.

III. The Egyptians probably deplore the Syrian decision to enter into intimate ties with the Soviet bloc.

- A. Nasr is no longer the sole intermediary between the USSR and the Arab states.
- B. The neutralist doctrine on which Nasr has pinned his bid for Arab leadership has been compromised.
- C. The Egyptian press, however, will continue to join the hue and cry about an American plot and will support current Syrian policy without criticizing Syria's ties with the USSR.

25X1

- IX. Syrian leftists will now have a chance to consolidate their control by capitalizing on their charges against the United States.
- A. A real threat to the governments of Jordan and Lebanon will come into being.
  - B. The tendency toward polarization--for the US or for the USSR--may begin to supplant Arab neutralism which Nasr has been promoting.